

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 USIA-15 TRSE-00 MBFR-03

SAJ-01 DODE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 ACDA-19 COA-02 EB-11 IO-13

RSR-01 /151 W

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R 281435Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3898

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NATO UK IC

SUBJECT: BRITISH REQUEST FOR CURRENT ICELANDIC ATTITUDES
TOWARD NATO

1. BRITISH DCM ERIC YOUNG APPROACHED US DCM DOYLE MARTIN AUGUST 25 TO SAY HIS EMBASSY HAD RECEIVED "RATHER URGENT" REQUEST FROM FOREIGN OFFICE FOR EVALUATION OF CURRENT ICELANDIC ATTITUDES TOWARD DEFENSE MATTERS AND WHETHER THERE WAS ANY IMMEDIATE DANGER ICELAND MIGHT LEAVE NATO. IN SAYING HE WAS NEWLY-ARRIVED AND THEREFORE WAS RELUCTANT TO EXPRESS OPINIONS HIMSELF (ALTHOUGH HE CONCEDED HIS AMBASSADOR HAD SOME STRONG ONES), YOUNG LEFT IMPRESSION FOREIGN OFFICE INSTRUCTION MIGHT HAVE SUGGESTED CONSULTATION WITH US.

2. MARTIN SAID OUR VIEW WAS THAT CRISIS WAS LESS SEVERE THAN TWO MONTHS AGO PRIMARILY BECAUSE INCIDENTS WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE ON FISHING GROUNDS IN MEANTIME HAD BEEN RELATIVELY MINOR ONES AND
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BECAUSE ALTHING WAS NOT IN SESSION. SAID WE BELIEVED, HOWEVER,

THAT EMOTIONAL FEELING IN ICELAND WAS SUCH THAT ANOTHER SERIOUS INCIDENT COULD AT ANY TIME BRING ISSUE TO FORE AGAIN.

3. YOUNG SAID THEIR VIEW WAS SIMILAR BUT, OF COURSE, THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN FISHERIES AND DEFENSE MATTERS IN RELATIONS WITH ICELAND. MARTIN SAID HE THOUGHT EVERYONE WOULD AGREE THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO CONNECTION AND EVEN COMMUNIST MINISTER OF FISHERIES LUDVIK JOSEFSSON CLAIMED HE DREW NONE. WE CANNOT ESCAPE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT ATTITUDES TOWARD NATO AND ATMOSPHERE FOR DEFENSE RELATIONS ARE STRONGLY CONDITIONED BY FEELINGS OVER FISHERIES. YOUNG ACCEPTED THIS POINT AND SAID FRG DMC FUCHS WAS SAYING FORCEFULLY THAT IF THERE WAS NO PROGRESS IN FISHERIES DISPUTE, GOI WAS SURE TO "TAKE SOME DRAMATIC STEP" RELATING TO NATO PRIOR TO RECONVENING OF ALTHING IN OCTOBER. MARTIN SAID WE THINK THIS WOULD DEPEND LARGELY ON WHAT HAPPENS IN MEANTIME BUT WOULD NOT RULE IT OUT IF THERE SHOULD BE SERIOUS INCIDENT. POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT ACTUAL WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO WOULD REQUIRE ALTHING ACTION. WHILE AT PRESENT TIME MAJORITY OF ALTHING WOULD PROBABLY OPPOSE WITHDRAWAL, IN EMOTIONAL OUTBURST FOLLOWING ANOTHER SERIOUS INCIDENT, ALL BETS MIGHT BE OFF.

4. YOUNG THEN ASKED WHETHER FONMIN AGUSTSSON WOULD BE GOING TO UNGA AND WHETHER HE WOULD COMBINE IT WITH TALKS WITH USG OFFICIALS. MARTIN SAID WE UNDERSTOOD HE WOULD GO TO NEW YORK BUT DID NOT KNOW WHETHER SUBSTANTIVE CONVERSATIONS WITH USG OFFICIALS HAD BEEN ARRANGED OR EVEN REQUESTED. SAID WE SUSPECTED HIS VISIT TO UNGA MIGHT BE FOR ANOTHER PURPOSE. YOUNG REPLIED, "YES, I SUPPOSE WE HAVE TO EXPECT A BLAST AT US THERE."
IRVING

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